

Sep 1, 2004

**Facebook fun****More than 1,000 university students have found a new way to stalk each other online***By Trish Barba  
Staff writer*

Freshman computer science major Scott Buckel wants to meet a lot of new people at the university. With a few clicks of his mouse, now he can.

Thefacebook.com is an online directory revolutionizing the way more than 1,000 university students meet people.

It lets members put together a profile, list friends, see friends' friends and find people in their classes. The social network is used at 58 colleges and universities, including Yale University, Johns Hopkins University and the University of California, Berkeley, and has about 216,000 members. As of Sunday, there were 1,418 registered users from the university.

It was created in February by Harvard University junior Mark Zuckerberg. He "threw around the idea" with a couple of friends, and they thought it would be a good way for Harvard students to get to know one another, said Chris Hughes, another Harvard student who helps manage the site. They never expected it to spread as quickly as it did.

Zuckerberg is taking the fall semester off to manage the website because of its booming success. He is currently not making a profit from the site because all the money it makes from advertisements just help him "break even," Hughes said. In the future, they hope to expand and make a profit.

"We were so surprised by its growth because we thought it was something that would just be for Harvard students. We didn't think it would be this big," Hughes said. "But I guess that shows it's what people wanted."

In just three days, the site already had 839 registered users from this university. Hughes said it does not always happen this quickly, but the speed at which students signed up is not unusual.

Lauren Koenigbeerg, a junior English major at Georgetown University, said it also took that university by storm when it arrived in April. The sign-up process includes entering one's name, e-mail address, student status, password and profile and other information into the website.

Many students list not only their interests and classes, but also their AOL Instant Messenger screen names and phone numbers alongside what they plan to do over the summer and what dorm they live in.

"Most people are on it, and most of my friends are, too," she said. "At the beginning it was fun to always look at people's profiles and stuff, like one of your friends would mention a name and you could go look up a picture, or see how you're connected to people ... It's like stalkernet."

Buckel said he heard about the site from friends at other schools, and when he heard it had expanded to include this university, he immediately signed up.

"It's definitely great for freshmen," he said. "I've already met, like, 20 people."

Harry Alford, a sophomore letters and sciences major, said he is also using thefacebook.com to keep in touch with friends from high school, and admits he is addicted to the site.

"It's like the new AIM ... I like checking everyone's profiles, so now I have two sets of profiles to check," he said.

Anyone with a university e-mail address can register, and Hughes said there are many teaching assistants, staff and faculty signed up at other schools.

"I met a lot of people before I got [to the university] on the website, and that was really helpful," Buckel said. yy

<http://www.diamondbackonline.com/News/Diamondback/archives/2004/09/01/news6.html>

4/6/2005